

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 00941 161241Z

51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-10 NIC-01 SAJ-01

SSC-01 EB-07 ACDA-05 SAM-01 BIB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /100 W
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R 161145Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8947

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

COMUSSAG BANGKOK THAI

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 941

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, CB

SUBJ: GRUNK "IN-COUNTRY" CABINET FORMALIZED

REFS: A. PHNOM PENH 13682, DECEMBER 8, 1973 (NOTAL)

B. FBIS BANGKOK 151409Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

C. FBIS BANGKOK 151351Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

D. FBIS BANGKOK 151432Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

E. FBIS BANGKOK 141732Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

F. FBIS BANGKOK 151357Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: GURNK, IN TWO BELATED " DECREES" HAS ACTED TO
FORMALIZE THE 1973 DECISION TO MOVE ITS CABINET "IN-COUNTRY".
THE FACT THAT THESE DOCUMENTS WERE MADE PUBLIC IN CAMBODIA AND
NOT BY SIHANOUK IN PEKING MAY HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO REMIND
SIHANOUK THAT IT IS THE KC ON THE GROUND WHO ARE REALLY
RUNNING THE SHOW FOR THE OTHER SIDE. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 00941 161241Z

2. SIHANOUK AND OTHER GRUNK LEADERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN

UNDERSTANDABLY SENSITIVE TO CHARGES THAT GRUNK IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXILE FACADE IN PEKING, REMOTE FROM THE LAND AND PEOPLE IT FALSELY PROFESSES TO REPRESENT. TO COUNTER THIS CHARGE, SIHANOUK ON NOVEMBER 9, 1973 ANNOUNCED THAT ALL MINISTERIAL TITLES HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED INSIDE CAMBODIA. ON DECEMBER 7, 1973, HE ANNOUNCED THE NAMES OF THE NEW "IN-COUNTRY" MINISTERS (REF A). SOME LOOSE ENDS WERE LEFT, HOWEVER, THROUGHT THIS SERIES OF ACTIONS: SOME SUBSTANTIVE MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS, NOTABLY ECONOMY AND FINANCE, WERE NOT FILLED. THE FATE OF THE OUTGOING EXILE MINISTERS, FURTHERMORE, WAS LEFT IN LIMBO: THERE WAS NO ANNOUNCEMENT OF THEIR RESIGNATION AND/OR REASSIGNMENT. MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN INFORMALLY DESIGNATED IN SUBSEQUENT PROPAGANDA AS "SPECIAL ENVOYS" OR, MORE GENERALLY, FUNK CENTRAL COMMITTEE POLITBURO MEMBERS.

3. NOW, IN TWO NOVEMBER 15, 1974 DECREES SIGNED BY SIHANOUK AND PRIME MINISTER PENN NOUTH (BUT ONLY MADE PUBLIC JANUARY 15 BY THE "IN-COUNTRY" KHMER INFORMATION AGENCY IN FRENCH TO EAST ASIA), GRUNK HAS MOVED TO FORMALIZE AND COMPLETE THE CABINET. AS PENN NOUTH COMMENTS AT ONE POINT, THE DECREES SERVE TO OFFICIALLY CONFIRM THE ACTUAL SITUATION. THE NINE FORMER OVERSEAS MINISTERS HAVE BEEN "RELIEVED AT THEIR REQUEST" (REF B) AND THEIR REPLACEMENTS HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY APPOINTED (REF C). PENN NOUTH HAS CONGRATULATED THE NEW MINISTERS (REF D) AND ALSO SENT A LETTER OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING PERSONALITIES (REF E) PRAISING THEIR "HIGH SPIRITOF PATRIOTISM AND...COMPLETE DISINTERESTEDNESS". OF INTEREST ALSO IS THE GRUNK PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT IN THIS LATTER COMMUNICATION THAT HE HIMSELF IS "READY TO FOLLOW YOUR GREAT EXAMPLE OF ABNEGATION" AS SOON AS SIHANOUK AND "THOSE RESPONSIBLE IN THE COUNTRY" DEEM IT APPROPRIATE.

4. THE NEW LIST CONTAINS SOME RECENT APPOINTMENTS: KCP CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER KOY THUON AS MINISTER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AND FINANCE; MEN SAN AS MINISTER OF ARMAMENTS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT; BOTH OF THESE WERE

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PAGE 03 PHNOM 00941 161241Z

ANNOUNCED BY SIHANOUK IN OCTOBER 1974); AND A NEW ADDITION, ROS CHETHOR AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO JOIN THE OTHER DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, VAN PINY.

5. COMMENT: THE PUBLIC RELEASE OF THESE DECREES AT THIS TIME CAN BE PARTIALLY EXPLAINED AS ANOTHER STEP IN GRUNK'S CAMPAIGN TO PORTRAY ITSELF AS THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT INSIDE CAMBODIA. THE SUBSTANTIVE MINISTRIES, EXCEPT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ARE ALL NOW OCCUPIED BY PERSONS IN-COUNTRY. THE APPOINTMENT OF ROS CHETHOR AS

ANOTHER DEPUTY TO FOREIGN MINISTER SARIN CHHAK ATONES
SOMWHAT FOR THE EMBARRASSING FACT OF CHHAK'S RESIDENCE
IN PEKING. SIHANOUK AND PENN NOUTH, THE TWO TOP OFFICIALS
IN NAME AT LEAST, REMAIN IN CHINA. BUT THIS, AS IN THE
PAST, WILL CERTAINLY BE EXPLAINED AWAY BY THE NEED FOR
SIHANOUK TO STAY BY THE SIDE OF THE QUEEN MOTHER AND FOR
THE AILING PENN NOUTH TO RECEIVE TREATMENT BY PRC
DOCTORS.

6. MAKING THE DECREES PUBLIC TWO MONTHS AFTER THEIR
ALLEGED EFFECTIVE DATE AND IN CAMBODIA RATHER THAN BY
SIHANOUK IN PEKING RAISES QUESTIONS, NEVERTHELESS. IT
COULD MEAN THAT SIHANOUK'S INFLUENCE HAS DIMINISHED (REF A) AS
THE IN-COUNTRY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN SHAPE AND MOST OF
HIS SUPPORTERS IN EXILE HAVE BEEN EASED OUT. THE RELEASE OF THE
GRUK ORGANIZATIONAL DECREES MAY HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO REMIND
SIHANOUK AND HIS COTERIE AS TO WHO IS REALLY IN CHARGE. IN
ADDITION, SIHANOUK'S RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT GKR LEADERS
HAVE MADE CONTACTS WITH HIM HAVE BROUGHT HIM SUBSTANTIAL
INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY.
THE KC MAY THEREFORE HAVE CHOSEN THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT
TO RE-AFFIRM KC PRIMACY IN ORDER TO RESTRICT SIHANOUK'S
ROOM FOR MANEUVERING.
DEAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, MEMBERSHIP, PROPAGANDA, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, DOCUMENTS, ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PHNOM00941
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750017-0397
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750146/aaaabolr.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 PHNOM PENH 13682, 75 DECEMBER 8, 75 1973
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GRUNK "IN-COUNTRY" CABINET FORMALIZED
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, CB, GRUNK, (SIHANOUK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006